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New York

Chairman: Mr. Mernier . . . . . (Belgium)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda items 63 to 79 *(continued)*

General debate on all disarmament and international security items

Mr. Larraín (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Please accept, Mr. Chairman, the congratulations of the delegation of Chile on your election to guide the work of the First Committee. We are familiar with your professional skills and your mastery of the issues of disarmament and security, and accordingly we are sure that under your wise leadership our work will result in success.

Our country is committed to the important work the Conference on Disarmament is called upon to perform as the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament. It is for this reason that, after more than a year of deadlock, we are pleased at the impetus given to its work by the decision to establish the ad hoc committee to negotiate a convention on the prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other explosive nuclear devices.

Nevertheless, we believe that the Conference on Disarmament has not yet made any substantive progress in relation to nuclear disarmament as such, and we therefore feel it is important to reiterate the continuing and acknowledged priority of this issue, which makes it necessary that it receive appropriate consideration in that multilateral negotiating forum. It is for this reason that we emphasize once again the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which stressed the obligation to initiate and conclude negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament. Chile must emphasize that it will continue to promote a gradual and realistic approach to this issue, free from preconditions or a priori compulsory deadlines, which would only delay the attainment of our real objective.

Accordingly, we have taken note of the declaration made by a group of countries last June entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda", and we appreciate their desire to contribute to overcoming extreme positions in the sphere of nuclear disarmament.

Once again, Chile deeply regrets the nuclear tests in South Asia, as it has repeatedly stated on previous occasions as a matter of principle. This unfortunate situation has underlined the urgent need to strengthen the validity and universality of instruments such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and has made it clear that as long as there is no progress on the prohibition of nuclear weapons, it will be more difficult to defend the edifice of non-proliferation.

These developments, as well as all of the recent events in the nuclear sphere, make it clear how essential it is for international peace and security to maintain and strengthen, in a legally binding manner, the international non-proliferation regime. Accordingly, we regret the disappointing results of the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. There can be no doubt that the international community as a whole must resolutely and urgently assume its responsibility for the eradication and prevention of the threat of nuclear proliferation. For this reason, we renew

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our appeal to all States to sign and ratify the international instruments designed to eliminate the nuclear threat. We therefore welcome Brazil's recent accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Chile also supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of agreements freely entered into by the countries concerned, as well as the strengthening of those zones that already exist. We invite all States, and particularly the nuclear-weapon States, to continue along the road marked out by Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Pelindaba and Bangkok.

We believe that it is essential that we strive to develop and improve new instruments to regulate the manufacture, trade and use of conventional weapons. In this context, the Government of Chile welcomes the forthcoming entry into force, with the completion of the first 40 ratifications, of the Convention on the elimination of anti-personnel landmines, and Chile hopes to complete its process of legislative approval so that it will be able to ratify this important instrument.

We also support the initiatives designed to achieve greater transparency in armaments, in particular the application of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and of military expenditures, the provisions of which we comply with on a regular basis.

In our region, and in the context of confidence-building measures, Chile since last year been publishing a "defence book" which has become a tangible indication of the implementation of our policy of transparency in this respect.

In this regard, committed to the spirit of transparency adopted in the context of the two regional conferences of the Organization of American States on confidence-building measures, held in Santiago in 1995 and San Salvador in 1998, as well as in the Plan of Action of the second Summit of the Americas, held in Santiago in April this year, we urge all the countries of our region to make progress in the explicit formulation of their defence policies.

We also wish to stress on this occasion, because of the special importance we attach to it, the political declaration adopted by Chile together with the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR) countries at the presidential summit held in July this year in Ushuaia, Argentina, which established a zone of peace free from weapons of mass destruction and reaffirmed the will of the six participating countries to continue advancing along the road of cooperation with respect to all security issues.

We are greatly pleased by the decision taken by our Organization to maintain and revitalize the regional centres for peace and disarmament, particularly the Regional Centre in Lima, Peru. In this same context, we strongly support the activities of Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) in Geneva, which through its extensive and in-depth studies and analyses has become an important tool for the attainment of our objectives.

Chile is a full party to the Convention on Biological Weapons, and since 1995 has been participating actively in the ad hoc group whose mandate is to conclude a protocol to improve the Convention by incorporating into it a verification regime and specific measures for cooperation in the field of biotechnology. Accordingly, we reiterate the priority we attach to strengthening the Convention, and in particular to the speedy conclusion of the negotiations being carried out for the establishment of that regime. It was for these reasons that in June this year, together with other countries of our region, we adopted a joint declaration urging the activation of these negotiations, and last 23 September we joined 57 other States in a declaration for the purpose of providing the necessary political backing for the work of the ad hoc group.

We also wish to stress that Chile is committed to the Chemical Weapons Convention and its Organization. Accordingly, we have adjusted our domestic legislation and established the national authority to comply with its provisions, and we hope that the Convention will soon achieve universality.

We support the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We believe that this is the appropriate forum to analyse future courses of action in relation to disarmament. It should have a balanced agenda that seeks to incorporate the interests of the various actors involved and brings about a genuine updating of this issue, which has come to occupy a role of the greatest importance for our Government.

On a different subject, we note with special concern the worldwide commercialization of the transport of dangerous materials. In this connection, we attach special importance to the adoption of measures to regulate international maritime transport of radioactive wastes and spent nuclear fuel in accordance with the highest international safety standards.

Our concern is based on the risks that such transport poses for the health of the inhabitants and the marine environment of the regions of the coastal States where such transit takes place. Accordingly, we again reiterate the need to strengthen, within the competent international organizations, the regulation of the transport of radioactive wastes and spent nuclear fuel. This should include, among other things, guarantees that the marine environment will not be polluted, exchange of information on the routes selected, mandatory provision of information to coastal States on contingency plans in the event of an accident in international maritime transport, a commitment to recover radioactive wastes in case of accidents involving ships carrying them, and payment of compensation in the event of injury or damage. We are convinced that any progress we can make in this area will prove mutually advantageous both for the coastal States and for the States involved in this form of transport.

Mr. Makonga (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*interpretation from French*): My delegation welcomes your election, Sir, as Chairman of this important Committee of the General Assembly, which is charged with matters of disarmament and international security. Your reputation in the field of disarmament gives all delegations confidence in the effective guidance of the work of this Committee. My delegation heartily congratulates both you and your country, the Kingdom of Belgium, to which I wish to reiterate the great friendship of my country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

My delegation would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the Secretary-General for his outstanding reports on disarmament, peace and international security. They have proved indispensable for a better understanding of the question of peace, which is of paramount importance for the security of the whole of humankind.

I must take note, Mr. Chairman, on behalf of my delegation, of the outstanding work done by your predecessor, Mr. Mothusi Nkgowe of Botswana, for his masterful conduct of the work of the First Committee during the fifty-second session of the General Assembly.

The dawn of the third millennium is upon us. Slowly but surely, we are approaching the threshold of the twenty-first century. Humankind has achieved great progress in all areas during the century that is drawing to a close. While such progress is a source of great pride at the social, economic, political and technological levels, especially with regard to nuclear technology, progress in the area of armaments threatens the security of humankind. The uncertainty caused by nuclear technology for international peace and security is continuing to grow. Those who possess this type of weapons of mass destruction are becoming more and more concerned because they are thoroughly familiar with their most devastating effects.

During the first half of the month of May this year, nuclear tests in South-East Asia attracted attention and were loudly denounced, in particular by those countries that possess weapons of mass destruction. The producers of such weapons are not protected from the threats that they pose. They themselves are threatened in the same way as those who do not possess them.

These threats, which give rise to suspicion, distrust and caution, lead to the formulation of many agreements and consensus on disarmament, but also to inertia in putting such plans into effect. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) provides a clear example. Negotiations are deadlocked between the Russian Federation and the United States with regard to START III, which is aimed at reducing nuclear warheads and their delivery systems.

My country, whose resources could have enabled us to produce fissile materials in the past, joined all the other countries of the world in condemning the recent nuclear tests. With equal vigour we condemn the possession and stockpiling of all weapons of mass destruction, and we join the call for countries to renounce those weapons.

All humankind has a horror of these weapons of mass destruction. Our security lies not in the arms race but in the confidence that the countries that possess such weapons are able to inspire in those that do not. The monopoly of those weapons by some encourages those that do not possess them to try to develop them. All humankind would gain if there were open negotiations leading to the total destruction of such weapons.

It has been about a year and a half since my country came out of a war of liberation that came about as a result of decades of poverty for our people. At the end of the war my country welcomed all the international, regional and subregional initiatives aimed at achieving international peace and security.

We harbour no warlike intentions; nor do we covet the territory of our neighbours. We are eager to promote the social and economic development of our people, which has been delayed since the 1970s, despite the wealth of our

natural resources. My country has made economic development its weapon against the poverty of our people.

In order to bring peace to our national territory and stimulate the social and economic recovery of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Government has recovered all of the weapons that were in the possession of the former Zairian Armed Forces. My Government's struggle against the proliferation of small arms has yielded considerable results throughout our national territory.

Without meeting any internal resistance and with the support of the people, the Government has established as its main priority — to the detriment of excessive armament — the social and economic development of the Republic, which can be brought about only through the well-being of the people.

Considerable results have been achieved without outside assistance. The people have finally been able to eat on a daily basis, leaving behind the necessity of eating one meal every two days or of having members of the family take it in turns to eat. The entire population has praised the policies of the Government in promoting social development at the expense of arms policies. The war imposed upon us by neighbouring countries to break our spirit taught us that humankind is composed not only of lambs but of wolves.

Some analysts have said that envy of its resources is the reason why my country has been the victim of armed aggression. The Congolese population, which upon liberation was deprived of weapons by the struggle against the proliferation of light weapons, was victimized by the forces of aggression of neighbouring countries, whose diabolical cruelty has exacted — and is still exacting — a great human cost.

That aggression against the Democratic Republic of the Congo has challenged the will of the entire international community to bring peace to the subregion, which has been engulfed in flames since the 1970s. The hotbeds of tension have moved from one country to another, depending on the arms manufacturers or vendors, under the sometimes complaisant regard of international institutions that have responsibility for maintaining international peace and security.

The industrial infrastructures have been completely dismantled in the part of our country under occupation and have been transferred to the aggressor countries. The economic fabric of the country, already worn down by decades of poverty, has been completely destroyed in the occupied provinces. Gold, diamonds and other precious materials have been systematically plundered.

This situation is of great concern to my Government. Sovereignty and territorial integrity, having again become matters of essential importance, are now assigned top priority among all the objectives of our sovereign State and will henceforth absorb all of the resources of our country. The balance between social development and disarmament will inevitably be upset if a peaceful resolution of the situation is slow to arrive.

I should like to dwell for a moment on a crisis that is seriously threatening regional and international security, a matter for which this Committee has responsibility. The poverty created by the war harms not only the population of my country but those of the aggressor countries as well. All the countries involved in the conflict are developing countries. The meagre resources at their disposal should be assigned to the social well-being of their respective populations rather than to war. No matter how long or short this war may be, development will be sacrificed for its sake. If we arm ourselves further, social progress, which is the major goal of any responsible Government, will suffer. However, failing to arm ourselves further will mean exposing the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our State vulnerable to danger.

Faced with this dilemma, should we give credit to the claims of those warlike individuals who say, "Those who want peace must prepare for war"? That leads us to ask how we can reduce our military budgets in the face of the constant danger of a war imposed on us by our neighbours.

The war's destruction of the economic fabric of the country, the proliferation of small arms in the subregion and the displacement of the population have shattered the hope for peace, stability and sustainable development that was beginning to see the light of day in my country.

Africa produces very few weapons of war, but today it is the theatre of a number of armed conflicts. The current conflicts, like others in the history of our continent, have caused considerable human losses. In terms of world trade, the continent has given up its wealth to enrich other continents, even at the cost of the lives of its children.

Still today, human lives in Africa are viewed through the barrel of a gun by arms merchants, who consider them to be part of the economic cycle of their investment in armaments. Yet Africa, which is a good market for capital,

has many other areas in which non-African businesses could invest and earn more than they do by investing in human death.

Biological and chemical weapons are feared just as much as other weapons of mass destruction. My country, which denounces those weapons just as we denounce nuclear weapons, is concerned about another form of biological threat, one that might kill more slowly than the machete in the ethnic conflicts of the Great Lakes region, but that is nonetheless a major threat to the populations of the occupied areas. I am referring to the HIV virus, which the soldiers of the aggressor troops are spreading by raping Congolese women and girls. According to Marie-Louise Ndala, Coordinator of the National Network for Ethics, Law and HIV/AIDS, this is truly a great disaster waiting to happen.

The international community must take advantage of the technological progress made if we are to create a world that is free of insecurity and threats to the peace. We must give impetus to all ongoing negotiations in the field of disarmament and promote the processes and treaties aimed at denuclearizing our world. We must also safeguard international peace by calling on States to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other States. We must do what we can to eliminate threats of all kinds — physical, biological or others — in order to bring security to all humankind on the eve of the third millennium, which we will be entering in one year, two months and 11 days.

Mr. Čalovski (Macedonia): I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. You and your Bureau will have my delegation's full support and cooperation.

I should like to note with great satisfaction the presence in this Committee of my friend Vladimir Petrovsky, Director-General of the United Nations Office in Geneva and an acknowledged expert on international security and disarmament affairs.

I am pleased also to recall the important statement made by the Secretary-General at the beginning of our general debate last week.

As in the past, this year the First Committee will examine many issues important to disarmament and to the maintenance of international peace and security. We have before us voluminous documents, with more to come, and we will be discussing and adopting many draft resolutions. It is not easy to digest all this information in such a short period of time. On the basis of the documents before us, one could very easily conclude that the First Committee is not only a disarmament Committee. The fact that it is overloaded with so many aspects of disarmament, in our view — which is shared by other delegations — negatively affects the Charter-mandated duty of the General Assembly to examine all aspects of the present political situation, regional or global, with the aim of contributing to the maintenance of international peace and security, and preventing wars and conflicts and helping to resolve ongoing ones.

Due to present work arrangements, the General Assembly cannot play the role in world political affairs that was envisaged for it in the Charter. This is hindering the strengthening of multilateralism. We must agree on a new arrangement which will enhance the role and relevance of the General Assembly.

The present international political and security situation is in many ways unsatisfactory. We are witnessing too many wars, conflicts and crises which threaten international peace and security; they require urgent solutions. One cannot say that Member States are ignorant or that they do not like to be involved in the prevention and resolution of conflicts. The General Assembly and its First Committee are partly involved, mainly in a general deliberation about the conflicts or crises but not so much in the effort to resolve them.

We are lucky to have an active and devoted Secretary-General who is discharging his duties in an exemplary manner. It is also good that we have a diligent Security Council. But the fact is that many Member States feel marginalized in the effort to strengthen international peace and security. This is the main reason why multilateralism is going through a difficult period. Of course, something should be done about this negative development. Until then, major decisions on international peace and security will be taken outside of our Organization.

Last week the representative of Austria spoke at length on behalf of the European Union. My delegation shares those stated positions. In his comprehensive and very-well-prepared statement, that representative spoke about important aspects of the current problems on the international political scene that affect the maintenance of international peace and security.

It is well known that my country's region is continuing to experience enormous difficulties and to face situations

that threaten international peace and security. Just a few days ago, a new war in the Balkans was avoided, at the last moment. It would have been the sixth one this century. The Balkans were once a centre of European civilization, but now the region has become known worldwide primarily because of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Kosovo and Metohija. It is true that we have witnessed an enormous desire to help on the part of the international community, and I am sure that will continue. We are optimistic that the region will soon leave its difficulties behind and enter a period of development.

For that to become a reality, the international community will have to play a key role in enabling the Balkans to enter this period of development, peace and security. Good illustrations are the present arrangements in Kosovo and Metohija; the positive reports on the developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina; the successful outcome of the meeting of the Heads of Government of the Balkan countries, which took place in Antalya, Turkey, some days ago; and the Agreement on Establishment of the Multinational Peace Force of South-Eastern Europe, among Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Romania, Turkey and the Republic of Macedonia, signed in Skopje, the capital of my country, on 26 September this year.

The Antalya Declaration, the Summit Declaration of the Countries of South-Eastern Europe signed by the Prime Ministers of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the Republic of Macedonia, Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Turkey and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Albania, stresses:

> "As we approach the end of this century, we stress our common will to open a chapter of peace, understanding, economic welfare, prosperity and cooperation in the history of our region for the benefit of our peoples and of whole Europe. We are conscious that this can only be achieved by means of strengthening our good-neighbourly relations, promoting democratic values, the rule of law, human rights, including rights of persons belonging to national minorities, solidarity and cooperation. To this end, we firmly support further development of our mutual relations in all fields on a bilateral and multilateral basis."

It also emphasizes:

> "We do not ignore the existence of serious challenges to regional stability, including tensions, divergences and even crises. Our political will and determination for cooperation, supported by our peoples, are our most valuable assets to respond to such challenges. Our success in creating a more favourable political and economic environment will also facilitate the timely integration of all the countries of the region into the European and international communities. We strongly emphasize the importance of addressing the regional issues by the countries of South-Eastern Europe jointly."

It is important in this context to cite article II of the Principles of the Agreement on the Multinational Peace Force South-Eastern Europe:

> "1. The Parties ensure that the activities of the Multinational Peace Force South-Eastern Europe (MPFSEE/the Force) or South-Eastern Europe Brigade (SEEBRIG/the Brigade) hereby established are consistent with the purposes and the principles of the United Nations Charter.
>
> "2. This initiative:
>
> "a. is neither directed against any third state nor intended to form a military alliance of any form against any country or a group of countries.
>
> "b. is transparent and open to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Partnership for Peace (PfP) nations in the Region, 'able and willing' to contribute constructively, at any later stage.
>
> "c. will be in line with and supportive of PfP programmes which aim at the improvement of the regional cooperation within PfP and shall allow essential cooperation within the framework of the United Nations (UN), NATO, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Western European Union (WEU)."

On the basis of an objective analysis of the political situation of our region, with the aim of having a twenty-first century free from war conflicts, the following position should be reaffirmed and strictly observed by the member States.

The United Nations Charter and international law must be strictly complied with. In particular, the principles of good-neighbourly relations, the inviolability of international borders among States, and the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all States must be respected by all. International cooperation in all fields on the basis of mutual

interests and respect should be promoted, taking into account the necessity of preventing the marginalization of States. Democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights and solidarity should be promoted without hesitation or reservation.

To achieve results in these endeavours, the most important parts of practical policies and actions should be the undertaking of timely preventive measures; the speedy solution of ongoing conflicts and crises by combined political, economic and social measures; and the promotion of political and economic regional and global integration.

The future of our region lies therefore in its Europeanization, not in its Balkanization. It is difficult to foresee a stable and prosperous Europe without a stable and prosperous Balkans.

The process of disarmament is progressing, but it is too slow for us to be able to express satisfaction. There is a big gap between the awareness of the importance of the process and the readiness to undertake measures to promote the process. The slogan "less armament, better security" is not being followed by practical measures. Thus, we have enormous quantities of armaments and their production is increasing. What are we going to do with such a huge stockpile of armaments? If they are being produced not to be used, then the production and stockpiling of armaments is an irrational affair. This kind of situation is the main reason why, for many countries, the disarmament process is not a priority issue. It deserves to be. They have to find other means to strengthen their security, in the first place through the improvement of their relations with the neighbouring countries and with the countries of the region.

In our view, conventional weapons are the major threat to international peace and security. Every country has the right to have weapons for its national defence, but not to have more than what is reasonably necessary for that purpose. The problem is that many countries have more than they need for their national defence. Many countries are making lucrative business by producing various kinds of conventional weapons, small or large, offensive or defensive. At present, the production of these weapons is huge, stocks are increasing, and trade is lucrative and growing. Secrecy in this regard is deep. There are thousands of secret arrangements, both bilateral and multilateral. There are numerous illicit arrangements. There is no satisfactory international regime for the production, stockpiling, trade and use of conventional weapons. In this chaotic situation, each country is doing its best to protect its security. In a word, we are witnessing a really unhealthy security situation.

As a result of this, we are in favour of the establishment of an international regime which will regulate the production, stockpiling and trade of conventional weapons, large and small, and will ban illegal production and trafficking. We should, perhaps, start with a ban of the production and trade of offensive weapons and the international illegal trade in small arms. Of course, this does not mean that other measures dealing with transparency are not important. But ensuring transparency alone, without undertaking legally binding obligations, will not help to promote the maintenance of international peace and security. We endorse the Secretary-General's statements that disarmament should be concerned with small and large weapons and that we cannot afford to slacken our efforts to contain the proliferation of larger weapons.

I am pleased to state the satisfaction of the Republic of Macedonia that the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction — the Ottawa Convention — will enter into force in March 1999. The Republic of Macedonia has ratified the Convention and hopes that it will soon become a universal ban on landmines. The strong international will and resolve to ban antipersonnel mines is the main reason for the satisfactory speed with which the Convention has been ratified. We would like to recognize the special effort and role of Canada, and to note with satisfaction the initiative of the Government of Mozambique to host the first meeting of States parties, in Maputo in May 1999.

The Republic of Macedonia has from the outset been in favour of the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. This is so because we do not have such weapons and do not intend to have them in our defence arsenal, and because we fully adhere to the position that the elimination of these weapons can immensely enhance international peace and security and is a matter of interest and benefit to all States.

The April 1997 entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction was the most important event of the disarmament process. It was possible due to the political will of so many States and because of their resolve to eliminate chemical weapons from their military arsenals and in that way to help the maintenance of international peace and security. I was

personally very pleased to witness the Chemical Weapons Convention's entry into force, because it was concluded during my term of office as President of the Conference on Disarmament. We now have the duty to strengthen the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and to see that the Convention is fully observed. The Republic of Macedonia is in favour of strengthening the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. We would like to see an early conclusion of the projected protocol. In the meantime, we have to make sure that the Convention is observed.

There has been no major progress in the area of nuclear disarmament. We have witnessed nuclear tests by India and by Pakistan. There is no satisfaction with the preparations for the year-2000 review conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), following the outcome of this year's session of the Preparatory Committee. The expected vigorous START process did not materialize; the Conference on Disarmament was unable to start meaningful work due to an enormous gap between the positions of nuclear and non-nuclear States. The good news was Brazil's accession to the NPT, which my delegation would like to note with satisfaction, and the agreement in the Conference on Disarmament to establish an ad hoc committee to negotiate a fissile materials cut-off treaty. Also, we are pleased with the stated intention of India and Pakistan to join the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

Although we are not happy with the present state of affairs, there is no alternative but to continue to work to strengthen the NPT regime, to insist that all States become parties to that Treaty, and to insist that the nuclear States work much harder towards the realization of the goal that the twenty-first century should be free of nuclear weapons. In that effort, an important role could be played by ratifying the CTBT. The Republic of Macedonia is committed to ratifying the Treaty. Also very important in our view is the initiative to create nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among States of the region concerned. Not only do these strengthen the NPT regime; it is our view that they strengthen regional peace and security, which is even more important. Therefore, we have no hesitation in supporting the establishment of such zones in the Middle East, in South Asia, in Central Asia, in the southern hemisphere and elsewhere. It is very important to note with satisfaction the decision of Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan to abandon nuclear weapons, and to be non-nuclear States.

By the nature of its statute, the Conference on Disarmament is the main international body for the promotion of disarmament. We cannot say that the Conference concluded its work this year with significant results. For this, one cannot blame the Conference itself, the Secretariat of the Conference or the delegations to the Conference. The lack of political will and resolve of the members of the Conference on Disarmament to push the disarmament process through the Conference last year or this year should be viewed with concern. Instead of preparing legally binding instruments, the Conference spent much of its time as a forum for the discussion of important questions of the disarmament process. It is the duty of the General Assembly to address the present concerns. In our view, this problem can be resolved if it is seen as part of the process of reform of the United Nations. We cannot struggle for a relevant United Nations if an organ such as the Conference on Disarmament continues to be irrelevant. It is urgent, therefore, that the General Assembly review the question of the membership, the methods of work and the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament.

The Conference should be open for membership to all Member States. No member of the Conference should have the right to block the membership of any State Member of the United Nations. The Conference should abandon its present methods of work. It should not establish committees for various agenda items and should abolish the practice of appointing special rapporteurs. The Conference should examine each agenda item at informal plenary meetings and should adopt its decisions at formal meetings. Expertise should be provided by the secretariat of the Conference, not by member States. In our view, if the Conference on Disarmament wants to be relevant, it should give priority to conventional weapons — small or large, offensive or defensive. At the same time, it should abandon the practice of repeating itself on various aspects of nuclear disarmament.

The Disarmament Commission continues to be of marginal importance. It is obvious that there is not much interest in the Commission among States Members of the United Nations. We should therefore seriously consider the need for such a body. There could be a need for a broad and organized discussion of some disarmament questions, such as the need to organize a fourth special session on disarmament, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones or practical measures for disarmament. We would venture to suggest that this need for broad and organized discussion could be much better served by resumed sessions of the First Committee. The discussion would be more

relevant, more States would participate and that arrangement would also be less costly.

The agenda of the First Committee, as I stated at the beginning of my statement, is overloaded with disarmament issues. The fact is that in the allotted time it cannot discuss any of these issues thoroughly without well-prepared documents from the Secretariat. The discussion becomes one of routine and generality. Its impact on the disarmament process is therefore not satisfactory. The First Committee does not discuss important issues of the current international political and security situation, the current threats to international peace and security. This unsatisfactory situation can be overcome by having a resumed session of the First Committee to deliberate on the current important aspects of the international political and security situation and on the disarmament process.

Before concluding, I would like to take this opportunity to inform the Committee that my delegation, together with some other delegations interested in agenda item 64, entitled "Maintenance of international security — prevention of the violent disintegration of States", will submit a draft resolution along lines similar to those of resolution 51/55 of 10 December 1996. We hope the Committee will adopt it without a vote.

Mr. Al-Hassan (Oman): I would like at the outset to congratulate the Chairman and the members of the Bureau. I would also like to say that we are grateful to see the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs in our midst today.

I have prepared my statement in Arabic. However, I have decided to deliver it in English, with one request: that the Arabic version of the text be reflected in the records of the Committee.

I will try to be very brief in summarizing the main points regarding international, regional and national concerns that, in our national view, my delegation believes are of the utmost importance.

There is no doubt that recent years have seen tremendous progress in the field of disarmament towards creating a safer and better world for our States and for the generations to come. We believe that the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention, the process towards closing the loophole in the Biological Weapons Convention, and the signing of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the anti-personnel landmines treaty are without doubt the successes and the fruits of the end of the cold war.

My country, Oman, is a party to all conventions and treaties that deal with weapons of mass destruction — nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. I wish to reiterate here what my Foreign Minister stated this year before the General Assembly: Oman has decided to sign the CTBT soon.

Let me now speak about the Middle East, of which we are a part. Unfortunately, while the world is moving towards disarmament and creating a more secure world, that region still remains volatile. We view the situation as dangerous and hope that concrete steps will be taken not only by one side, but by all sides and all parties in the region. We believe it is high time for that region to transform itself into a region of tranquillity and coexistence.

Let me just say here that we believe that the Israeli nuclear threat constitutes a threat not only to the region itself, but also to the security and peace of the international community at large. We believe that the existence of nuclear facilities without any international monitoring or safeguards is a serious situation that should be dealt with accordingly. With the current progress towards bringing the peace process on track, we believe a step by Israel such as joining the international community and becoming party to the NPT would be a good step in the right direction.

In this regard, my delegation has continuously supported the initiative to establish the Middle East as a region free of all weapons of mass destruction. We believe that would add to the security of all States in the region, without exception.

Also in terms of our region, while my delegation understands the positions and national reasons that led India and Pakistan, respectively, to resort to nuclear testing, this step necessitates a call on our part to call upon those two neighbourly countries to sign the NPT and the CTBT. We hope that in time they will have a chance to do so without having to jeopardize their national security interests.

Let me conclude this very brief statement by saying that we support the role of the United Nations in terms of disarmament, and we look forward to seeing the Secretariat play a further role in dealing with grand issues that are of concern to the international community. Nuclear, chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction and other

serious weapons are truly of concern to all of us. In our region we want to see the role of the United Nations to be seen. We believe there is room for the United Nations to play an active role in the Middle East and in the Gulf. We hope that in the coming years and days we might see such a role being played.

We assure the Under-Secretary-General of our full understanding and complete cooperation, in particular when it comes to our region and our sphere.

Mr. Mohammed (Ethiopia): Allow me on behalf of my delegation to extend to you, Mr. Chairman, and other members of the Bureau our congratulations on your election to guide the work of the Committee. I am confident that with your experience and able guidance the deliberations of this committee will be successful. Let me seize this opportunity to assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation in conducting the deliberations.

The post-cold-war period has witnessed encouraging developments in the field of disarmament. The indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the Convention banning anti-personnel landmines and the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention are among the notable accomplishments of the past few years. The decisions of the Conference on Disarmament to establish ad hoc committees to negotiate an international arrangement to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices are also positive developments. In spite of these positive developments, much remains to be done to achieve the goal of complete and general disarmament, especially in the area of nuclear disarmament.

Complementing the effective implementation of the NPT and the CTBT with multilateral negotiations on nuclear-weapons issues is essential if we are to achieve nuclear disarmament. The strong commitment and cooperation of nuclear-weapon States is indispensable in this regard. Failure to implement the CTBT will negatively influence the whole process of the disarmament with regard to weapons of mass destruction, which would mean a regression in the disarmament process as a whole. Nuclear disarmament should remain high on the disarmament agenda of the international community. In this light, appropriate steps should be taken, including through the establishment of an ad hoc committee of the Conference on Disarmament to begin negotiations on a phased programme for a complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified time-frame.

Needless to say, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones contributes to the consolidation of the international non- proliferation regime and to the strengthening of the security of States belonging to the zones. Thus, the various nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties, including most recently the Treaty of Pelindaba, are most welcome, and their universal acceptance is essential. Efforts to establish new nuclear-weapon-free zones in the remaining regions of the world should also be encouraged and supported.

Ethiopia welcomes the entry into force and the growing number of ratifications of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. Our country places high priority on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We would like to underscore that the elimination of chemical weapons and the attainment of universal adherence to the Chemical Weapons Convention demand a strong commitment from all States, big or small, rich or poor alike.

It has been widely recognized by the international community that the proliferation of light weapons and illicit arms-trafficking pose a significant threat to peace, security and development. Excessive accumulations of these weapons have ignited conflicts and caused immeasurable social and economic destruction and the dislocation of populations. The magnitude of these problems is particularly evident in many parts of Africa. In this context, we agree with the conclusion of the Secretary-General, expressed in his report entitled "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa" (A/52/871), that the issue should be addressed as a matter of urgency. We also support the recommendation by the United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts on the convening of an international conference on the illicit arms trade.

Cognizant of the fact that transparency in armaments would contribute to enhancing confidence-building among States, Ethiopia has started in the last few years to provide information to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. In 1997 Ethiopia was among eight African countries that provided information to the Register, and it will continue to provide such information.

The conclusion of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-

personnel Mines and on Their Destruction is an important step in disarmament in the area of small arms. Ethiopia fully participated in the Ottawa process and signed the Convention on 3 December 1997, as soon as it was opened for signature. Ethiopia, as a country that has been highly affected by these weapons, attaches paramount importance to the implementation of the Convention and seeks substantive support in its demining efforts. In this connection, we welcome the fortieth ratification, by Burkina Faso, which will ensure the entry into force of the Convention on 1 March 1999. We also appreciate the willingness of Mozambique to host the first conference of the States parties in Maputo in May 1999.

Notwithstanding the very encouraging efforts by the international community to ban and eliminate anti-personnel landmines, developments in certain parts of the world, in particular in the Horn of Africa, have become a source of serious concern. Here we are referring to the irresponsible and indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines by the Eritrean Government, with the aim of terrorizing civilians, denying them access to farmlands and forcing them to flee their homes, as part of Eritrea's war of aggression against Ethiopia. These acts of the Eritrean Government not only constitute a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law but also represent a serious challenge to international and regional efforts to ban and eliminate anti-personnel landmines.

Please allow me at this juncture to say a few words about the situation in our subregion of the Horn of Africa. In the past few years Ethiopia has made every effort, in particular through the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to work for peace and to prevent and contain conflicts. In this respect, as mandated by the OAU and IGAD, Ethiopia has continued to assist in the efforts to resolve the crisis in Somalia. Although success has not come easily, we remain convinced that regional cooperation and mechanisms could play an important role in the prevention and resolution of conflicts.

Another major disappointment that we have had recently in the area of peace and security in our subregion is the naked aggression that Eritrea has been unleashing against Ethiopia since 12 May 1998. This aggression has obviously been a challenge to our efforts in strengthening regional security and disarmament. However, in spite of the continued aggression of Eritrea, we are making the necessary effort to resolve the conflict by peaceful means on the basis of Security Council resolution 1177 (1998), of 26 June 1998, and the resolution of the thirty-fourth summit of the Heads of State or Government of the OAU.

It is my country's firm conviction that, as a guarantee of peace and security, there is no alternative to disarmament in all categories of weapons, conventional weapons as well as weapons of mass destruction. Ethiopia will continue to contribute to the success of the efforts of the international community towards that end.

Mr. Sabel (Israel): Please accept my delegation's congratulations, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of this very important Committee of the General Assembly. Please feel assured that you enjoy our full support and cooperation in the task ahead of us all here. At the same time, I would like to express our thanks to Mr. Nkgowe for the efficient way he conducted the work of this Committee during the previous session.

Israel is a small State with a population of less than 6 million, concentrated mostly in a coastal strip some 20 kilometres wide. The vulnerability inherent in our geography, combined with the potentially existential threat to us posed by some of our neighbours, inevitably influences our attitude as to how to achieve arms control and disarmament arrangements. Notwithstanding our special security environment, we fully share the concerns of the world community about the proliferation of weapons. Our concern applies to the proliferation of both conventional and non-conventional weapons.

Israel is, I believe, unique in being in the unhappy situation of having neighbour States, armed with missiles and weapons of mass destruction, some of which are openly denying our right of existence and claiming to be working for our annihilation. This inevitably makes us cautious in approaching issues that affect our security.

Israel believes that arms control in our region will prove successful only if it is conceived as an enhancement of the security of each and every State and not as an endangerment of such security. Israel's approach to issues of arms control and disarmament could be characterized as a combination of optimism and realism.

We are optimistic as to the prospects of arms control and must continue to be so for our sake and for the sake of future generations. All of us in the Middle East have suffered from the consequences of the arms race in the area and from the proliferation of conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction. If the resources that have been devoted to weapons had been invested in economic

and social development, I believe the Middle East now would be an economic powerhouse and a source of admiration for the world rather than what I suspect is a source of worry.

We are optimistic because we see what has already been achieved. We are optimistic that the peace process that commenced with a Peace Treaty with Egypt, and was followed by ongoing peace talks with the Palestinians — ongoing this very day — and a Treaty of Peace with Jordan, will eventually encompass the whole of the region and bring with it regional stability.

We must, however, temper our optimism with realism. Our area includes States that threaten our security and continue to negate our very right of existence. One of these States, Iraq, devoted a major part of its vast income from oil to attempts to develop nuclear weapons. It was in the process of developing those weapons, notwithstanding its ratification of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the existence of safeguards. It developed chemical and biological weapons and used the poison gas it developed both against its own population and against Iran. During the Gulf war its missiles were fired at Israel's cities and cities in Saudi Arabia. Those same missiles were capable of carrying non-conventional warheads.

Other States in our area have developed chemical weapons, and they possess and continue to maintain operational ballistic missiles armed with chemical warheads. I must admit that it sounded to our ears strange in the extreme to hear statements in this Committee from such States berating us for not being forthcoming on disarmament. It would be rash in the extreme for Israel not to carefully review arms control arrangements in the light of the behaviour of such States and in the light of the reality of our area.

It is against this background that we in Israel have attempted to fashion our arms control policy. We envisage arms control fundamentally as a regional endeavour incorporating, where feasible, the obligations of international instruments. Universal international instruments certainly have a role to play, but we see regionally negotiated arrangements, reinforced by mutual verification by the States in the region, as the key to their successful application. Confidence-building measures have a role to play here, and the regional arms control and regional security talks were a step in that direction.

The experience of other areas in the world has shown that full confidence is usually achieved only where States enter into legally binding regional arrangements incorporating mutually verifiable compliance. Verification by a third party, however efficient and however well meaning, will never obtain the same degree of assurance that can be obtained as when verification is carried out by experts of the State that would be threatened by a violation. Nevertheless, there are some issues that can be effectively covered by international instruments, and in those cases Israel could accept their application without waiting for circumstances that would allow mutual verification.

The general premise on which Israel's policy is based is inevitably reflected in our attitude to the various issues on the agenda of this Committee, and I would like to refer to some of the issues.

On the issue of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), Israel fully supports the nuclear-test ban. We have ratified the Partial Test-Ban Treaty, we have signed the CTBT and we have not conditioned our signature on regional developments. An Israeli delegation was active in the drafting of the Treaty, and we remain constructively involved in the work of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBT Organization. In that respect, our endeavours are aimed at the expeditious development of all the necessary concepts, manuals, procedures and systems needed for a viable and effective CTBT Organization in accordance with the Treaty. Furthermore, Israel has begun preparations for involvement and integration in the proposed International Monitoring System.

Although Israel has not yet ratified the Treaty, we are aware of the international legal obligations that apply to any State upon signature of such a treaty, even prior to ratification, and needless to say, Israel accepts the obligation involved. We would like to see universal adoption of the CTBT, and we welcome the recent statements of India and Pakistan in this respect.

Moving to another major issue, Israel firmly believes in the eventual establishment of a mutually verified nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. We would like to see such a zone free of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, as well as ballistic missiles. We believe such a zone should be established by direct negotiations between States after they recognize each other and have established full peaceful relations with each other. It cannot be established by parties other than the parties themselves, nor can it be established in a situation where some of the States

claim they are in a state of war and refuse in principle to maintain peaceful relations. The zone would be directly negotiated and mutually verifiable, but it would, in fact, achieve on a regional basis the non-proliferation goals of the NPT.

The agenda item entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East" is a blatant political manoeuvre. The real dangers of proliferation have been ignored, and they do not emanate from Israel. The evidence produced by the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Action Team on Iraq is ignored, the North Korean crisis is ignored, Iranian efforts to acquire non-conventional capabilities are ignored.

Israel seeks no dispute with the Iranian people nor with the Iranian Government. We cannot fail, however, to be worried when Iran develops long-range ballistic missiles and displays them publicly while declaring that they are intended for use against Israel.

Israel does not threaten its neighbours; Israel has signed the CTBT and carries out the obligations emanating from that signature. We have not violated any international norm; nevertheless we are the subject of this politically inspired agenda item. It is uncalled for and should be removed from the agenda as it was removed from the recent IAEA Assembly.

On the question of a possible fissile material cut-off treaty, Israel is on record as joining the consensus in the General Assembly in 1993. Nor were we opposed to the decision in the Conference on Disarmament this year to establish an ad hoc committee on the basis of the Shannon mandate. The scope of the proposed treaty and negotiations are not yet clear, and Israel, like other States, will have to examine its position on the basis of the exact scope to be defined. I would like to emphasize that we foresee the principle of fissile material cut-off as being subsumed in a Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone.

The issue of small arms is increasingly attracting the attention of the international community. Israel views with grave concern the illicit transfer and proliferation of small arms, small-arm ammunition and explosives. This proliferation threatens international security and has exacerbated casualties among civilians and in internal conflicts.

Israel supports international cooperative efforts aimed at curbing the illicit circulation and international trafficking of small arms. Such illicitly transferred small arms are being used by terrorists, guerrilla groups and criminal organizations, with horrific results, and we have heard some representatives of African States pointing them out.

Israel would be happy to join in an international effort to prevent such illicit transfers. In this respect, we note with interest the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials. Other proposals worthy of study would be the various proposals that would obligate the marking of firearms during their manufacture.

Israel has signed the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), but we have not yet ratified it. We note with unhappiness that Egypt is one of the Arab States that has not signed the CWC. One of the factors Israel will have to take into account when making a decision as to ratification is the fact that none of the chemical-weapon-capable or chemical-weapon-suspect armed Arab States have signed, let alone ratified, the treaty. Some have openly declared that they have no intention of so doing. It is a sobering thought for us that some of our neighbours contemplate the use of poison gas against us.

On another issue, Israel is a party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), and I am pleased to be able to inform this Committee that we are in the process of preparing the ratification of the amended Protocol II, concerning mines, and Protocol IV, concerning laser weapons. Although Israel is not a party to the Ottawa agreement on anti-personnel landmines, we in Israel have ceased production of anti-personnel landmines. We have declared a moratorium on their export and therefore will be happy to participate in the drafting of an international agreement banning such export. Israel furthermore participates in international projects for mine clearance and rehabilitation of victims of mines.

Although technically Israel cannot join the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), we have undertaken to comply fully with its provisions. In other fields of non-proliferation supply control, Israel has enacted stringent legislation on export control that enables us to ensure that we are not a source of proliferation.

On the confidence-building measures of transparency in armaments, Israel supports the principle of the Register and makes an annual report. We do not, however, believe it is fruitful to widen the scope of the Register, and we feel effort should be devoted rather to encouraging States to

report to the existing Register. We find it strange to hear the vocal call of some of our neighbour States for vastly increasing the scope of the Register when they in fact fail to submit any report, even under the existing limited scope.

Finally, Israel will continue to participate in international arms-control projects despite our assessment of critical regional threats. Taking into account the very harsh history of our region, I believe Israel's record is impressive, and we in Israel intend to continue to play our part in the arms-control efforts of the family of nations.

Ms. Simone (Armenia): Let me begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. This promises to be an active year and one which will require great skill and energy to guide us through the debate and adoption of draft resolutions. We have full confidence in your abilities, and those of the Bureau, to meet the challenges we will face this year.

The year 1998 saw setbacks and achievements in the field of non-proliferation and disarmament. The nuclear tests conducted in South Asia have reminded us how much work remains to be done in the area of nuclear non-proliferation. On the other hand, we witnessed a significant achievement when the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction was ratified by over 40 countries in nine months. In addition, an agreement was reached to begin negotiations on the ban of the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons. While there have been some events this year which have also posed a threat to international peace and security, these events have served to reinforce the importance of the work being done in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

As a non-nuclear-weapon State developing peaceful nuclear energy, Armenia attaches great importance to the issues of international compliance with the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament objectives and obligations. We reaffirm our commitment to the full implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

To further ensure the implementation of the Treaty's objective — to prevent nuclear proliferation — States parties must continue to abide by the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Armenia supports strengthening and improving the effectiveness of the safeguards regime by introducing the Protocol Additional to Safeguards Agreements. We are proud to state that Armenia has become the first State with an operating power plant to sign the Protocol Additional to its safeguards agreement.

Armenia attaches great importance to cooperation in the field of peaceful energy use and nuclear safety. In this context, I am pleased to announce that a month ago Armenia ratified the Convention on Nuclear Safety. Nuclear safety is a fundamental issue. Universal recognition of the importance of implementing the provisions of the Convention at the regional, national and international levels will promote and maintain the highest standards of safety. It is in all of our interests that those States that have not yet signed and ratified the Convention do so at the earliest possible date.

The non-proliferation regime has been seriously tested over the past six months. The nuclear tests in South Asia undermined the objectives of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We welcome the indications given by India and Pakistan that they are moving towards adherence to the CTBT. We were pleased to see the high-level talks between the Foreign Secretaries of India and Pakistan last week and hope that this is the beginning of a fruitful dialogue which will lead to a resolution of the issues which gave rise to the testing earlier this year.

On a more positive note, the recent agreement to launch negotiations on the fissile material cut-off treaty in the Conference on Disarmament reaffirms the commitment of the international community to strengthen peace and security. The fissile material cut-off treaty is considered an important next step after the CTBT, as it will prevent the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

Armenia joined the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) with an underlying commitment to strengthening regional stability. Unfortunately, Armenia and Georgia are the only two States in the Transcaucasus to have taken this step. It is hard to see how an effective chemical weapons ban and control regime can be established in the Caucasus if all those in the region are not parties to the Convention.

As a member of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Armenia, together with other member States, will make every effort to further its most pressing task: that of the universal application of the CWC. In this regard, it is essential to ensure an efficient implementation regime for the Convention.

Armenia seeks to enhance cooperation among member States in the chemical industry, as provided for by the Convention, in particular the exchange of technical information, equipment management and chemical materials production. We also welcome economic cooperation within the context of the CWC at the regional level. This is where the nations of the Caucasus need to collaborate in a common effort aimed at development and prosperity, which in turn will enhance mutual confidence and regional stability.

Armenia has always stated that it has never had, does not now possess and will never acquire any chemical weapons in the future. We believe that freeing the world from chemical weapons is an achievable goal.

To fully prevent the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, it is necessary to focus on the issue of enhancing the implementation and verification regimes. One step towards this end is the successful conclusion of the negotiations by the ad hoc group on the strengthening of the verification and compliance provisions of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC).

The possibility of use or accidental emission of biological weapons, in addition to creating political instability, would cause enormous human losses, as well as have a devastating impact on agriculture and food production. We are confident that these concerns are shared throughout the world. Therefore, we welcome the increased efforts of States to successfully conclude the negotiations on the verification protocol to the BWC. We believe that the development and subsequent implementation of the verification protocol will significantly reduce the chance of biological weapons being used.

Armenia welcomes the fortieth ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, which will become a binding international instrument on 1 March, 1999. We consider the Convention an important step forward in the elimination of one category of excessively injurious conventional weapons. Armenia supports the Convention and is ready to take measures consistent with its provisions. However, if it is to assume legally binding obligations, Armenia expects clearly observed readiness and reciprocity from our neighbours in the region.

We are concerned with Azerbaijan's reluctance to accede to the ban. The existence of a large number of landmines along our borders with Azerbaijan is a great source of concern that must be addressed. Armenia's full participation in the Convention is contingent upon a similar level of political commitment by other States in the region to assuming their obligations under the Convention.

Armenia attaches great importance to the full implementation of conventional arms control agreements. We believe that the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) is an essential instrument to guarantee stability in the region and prevent large-scale conventional attacks. We welcome the negotiations that have already begun in Vienna to adapt the Treaty to the new European security environment, with due consideration of the interests of all CFE States parties. The Treaty shall remain an important instrument in maintaining European conventional stability and security.

Despite the major role the Treaty has had in providing stability within its area of application, there still remain States parties that flagrantly violate the CFE Treaty. Azerbaijan considerably exceeds its Treaty limitations in three Treaty-limited ground equipment categories. Its continued disregard of the Treaty's principles threatens stability in the Caucasus and in Europe generally.

Armenia considers the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva as the central forum for negotiating global disarmament instruments. We believe that the successful negotiation of the CTBT is a clear example of the capability of the Conference in working out global instruments aimed at strengthening peace and security throughout the world.

Armenia has acceded to all global instruments on disarmament that have been negotiated in the Conference on Disarmament. Furthermore, we have stated that we remain committed to the principles of disarmament. In pursuing its national security policies, Armenia has made it a priority to support international efforts to free the world of weapons of mass destruction. As a sign of our commitment to the principles of disarmament, Armenia wishes to become a full Conference member. We believe that membership will allow us to contribute to the area of disarmament. We hope that States parties will support Armenia in its willingness to engage more actively in the work of the Conference.

In conclusion, Armenia is looking forward to actively participating in the work of the First Committee this year.

Mr. Kanju (Pakistan): It is a pleasure to be able to warmly congratulate Mr. Mernier on his well-deserved election as the Chairman of the First Committee at this

important session. The decisions of this Committee will greatly influence the course of international developments in the field of security, disarmament and arms control. The exercise of his diplomatic skills will be in considerable demand at this session.

My statement here will definitely focus on the many statements made here this year that have prominently highlighted the nuclear tests conducted last May by India and, in response, by Pakistan. Since this is an issue of the most direct and vital concern to my country, I wish to utilize this opportunity to explain Pakistan's perspective — our challenging security environment, our patient endeavours on behalf of non-proliferation, our calculated decision to respond to India and our responsible approach in the aftermath of the nuclearization of South Asia.

For any objective evaluation of these tests, it is essential to bear in mind the history and the context of nuclear proliferation in South Asia. It is essential to be aware of the ambitions of India and the compulsions of Pakistan.

Since its independence, Pakistan has confronted the endemic hostility of its neighbour, India. Three wars have been fought, mainly over the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Even today, a brutal nine-year-old conflict is under way in occupied Kashmir between its 10 million people and an occupation force of over 600,000 Indian troops. Along the Line of Control in Kashmir, there are sharp exchanges of fire almost every day. There is a military stand-off in the Siachen Glacier. Despite the propaganda about the so-called threat from China, almost all of India's military assets — an army of 1.2 million, over 700 combat aircraft, a large naval flotilla — are deployed against Pakistan.

Since last year, the nuclear-capable Prithvi missile — whose declared targets are Pakistan's major cities, sensitive installations and defence assets — has been produced and deployed. Soon, the medium-range Agni missile will be further tested and deployed. At the same time, India is proceeding with the acquisition of a large number of aircraft, anti-missile systems and other armaments, worth over $10 billion, from some of those very countries which decry the nuclearization of South Asia. Meanwhile, Pakistan's conventional capabilities have been severely eroded because of the unjust embargoes and sanctions imposed against us. The growing conventional asymmetry has created the possibility of military aggression being committed against Pakistan once again. Nuclear deterrence is all that stands in the way of such aggression.

It is not Pakistan, but India, which "inducted" the nuclear dimension into the volatile security environment of South Asia. Let me recount a few facts. First, India's ambition to acquire nuclear weapons, though often disguised, has been no secret. India acquired a Canadian research reactor and other nuclear facilities outside safeguards in the 1960s. It has refused since 1968 to sign the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). It insisted on the legitimacy of so-called peaceful nuclear explosions. It diverted nuclear fuel from its civilian programme to explode a so-called peaceful nuclear device in May 1974. Since then, it has vastly enlarged the number of its nuclear facilities and fissile material centres outside safeguards.

Second, India simultaneously developed nuclear delivery systems, especially ballistic missiles. The Prithvi, tested 16 times, and the Agni, tested four times, are overtly military programmes encompassing several types of these missiles. India's space launch vehicle will give it an intercontinental ballistic missile capability in the future.

Third, India has developed its nuclear and missile programmes with the active assistance and cooperation of several industrialized countries. Some of this cooperation is continuing today, such as support for the Sagarika sea-based missile.

Fourth, Pakistan's actions in the nuclear and missile fields were taken, at each stage, in response to the escalatory steps by India. Pakistan has exercised considerable self-restraint. We did not reciprocate India's 1974 nuclear test. We exercised unilateral restraint in the production of fissile materials. We held back from deploying and flight-testing our missiles.

Fifth, although every escalatory step was initiated by India, it is Pakistan that was consistently subjected to a series of discriminatory sanctions and penalties. After 1974, civilian safeguarded nuclear cooperation with Pakistan was terminated by the very countries that had made India's nuclear explosion possible. Contracts for the purchase of nuclear facilities under safeguards were aborted through pressure on the supplier countries. Meanwhile, fuel supplies to India were continued. Such discrimination was compounded by specific legislation adopted against Pakistan by some major Powers.

Sixth, Pakistan's initiatives to promote nuclear non-proliferation in South Asia received less than adequate support from the major Powers. For 25 years, Pakistan pressed for the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone. No

serious endeavour was made to convince India that this was a worthy objective. Since 1993 we have pressed for the creation of a zero-missile zone in South Asia. Our great-Power interlocutor refused even to convey this proposal to India. Since 1987 we have been proposing a bilateral nuclear-test-ban treaty. Not a single country supported this initiative, not even those who lecture us today about the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). In July 1996, when India threatened to veto the CTBT in the Conference on Disarmament, it was told that it need not adhere to the Treaty so long as it did not block its transmission to the General Assembly. India did indeed veto the Treaty in the Conference, and voted against it in the Assembly. But this had no adverse impact on its bilateral relations with the principal sponsors of the CTBT.

Seventh, when the Indian Government led by the Bharatia Janata Party (BJP) declared its aim of "inducting" nuclear weapons, no official concern was expressed by the major Powers, despite the warning conveyed officially by our Prime Minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, to their leaders. When Pakistan's Foreign Minister expressed our concern, on 19 March 1998, to the Conference on Disarmament, there was again no response. Instead, we were assured by influential friends of the "restraint and responsibility" of the new Indian Government. For good measure, they imposed Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) sanctions against a Pakistani entity in reaction to our first missile test.

A sizeable body of opinion in Pakistan is convinced, in the light of the facts I have recounted, that it is only Pakistan, and not India, which is the target of the crusade for non-proliferation. Conspiracy theorists gained further credence when India's preparations for its nuclear tests were not detected either by national technical means or by human intelligence. This was all the more surprising since, four days before the tests, a non-governmental group had circulated a paper in Washington which stated that

> "preparations for an Indian nuclear test have been further confirmed by our sources in India, which report all kinds of feverish night-time activities in the vicinity of Pokhran in Rajasthan state".

When India conducted its three-plus-two tests, the Government of Pakistan was confronted with a fateful decision. We waited 17 days before responding. In formulating our decision, the Prime Minister of Pakistan took full account of the views and suggestions conveyed to him by the leaders of a number of friendly countries, including President Clinton, President Jiang Zemin, Prime Minister Tony Blair, Prime Minister Hashimoto and others. In all these contacts, we dealt with our friends honestly and openly. Unlike others, we did not practice deception.

In the final analysis, our decision to test became inevitable for three overriding reasons: First, there was a steady escalation in the provocations and threats emanating from India. The Prime Minister of India declared that India was a nuclear-weapon State, that it had a "big bomb" and that it was prepared to use this in case of an attack or aggression, conventional or non-conventional. Indian leaders also made it clear that they had weaponized their nuclear capability and had a command and control system in place. Inaction would have eroded national morale in Pakistan. It could have compromised the existential deterrence which had preserved the peace between India and Pakistan for almost two decades.

Secondly, we could not rule out the possibility that the BJP Government would indeed engage in some form of adventurism against Pakistan. The BJP's election manifesto had promised to "induct" nuclear weapons and to conduct "hot-pursuit" attacks across the line of control in Kashmir. They had speedily implemented one promise; we had every reason to fear they might try to deliver on the second.

Our concern was intensified when, on 18 May 1998, the Secretary-General of the BJP and Home Minister of India, Mr. Lal Krishna Advani, stated that

> "Islamabad should realize the change in the geostrategic situation in the region and the world and roll back its anti-India policy, especially with regard to Kashmir. India's bold and decisive step to become a nuclear-weapon State has brought about a qualitative new stage in Indo-Pakistan relations, particularly in finding a solution to the Kashmir problem. It signifies India's resolve to deal firmly and strongly with Pakistan".

Thus, for Pakistan, the danger of aggression was clear and present. Pakistan could not leave the Indian leadership in any doubt about the credibility of our capability to deter and respond devastatingly to any aggression against our country or preemptive strikes against our facilities.

Thirdly, despite our calls for resolute action, the response of the international community was weak and partial. There was no meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the five permanent members of the Security Council; there was no Security Council resolution; there were no Group of 8 sanctions on funding from international financial

institutions. All this was to come only later, after Pakistan had tested. Two nuclear-weapon States wanted to explore India's conditions for CTBT adherence. Several countries welcomed India's sudden agreement to lift its opposition to the negotiations on a fissile-materials treaty in Geneva. It became crystal-clear to Pakistan that, despite the sentiments of support and encouragement conveyed to us, no other Power — not one — was prepared to underwrite Pakistan's security against the possibility of Indian aggression. We had to ensure this ourselves.

Pakistan decided to demonstrate its nuclear capability to deter aggression. Our failure to demonstrate our capability could have eroded the delicate psychological judgements that are the essence of deterrence. Any consequent miscalculation may have led to disastrous consequences. As the 1991 strategic concept of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) states,

> "The fundamental purpose of the nuclear forces of the Allies is political: to preserve peace and prevent coercion and any kind of war." *(The Alliance's New Strategic Concept, para. 54)*

Pakistan's action was therefore a legitimate act of self-defence against the possibility of military aggression following India's tests and its provocative actions. Our tests were consistent with Pakistan's right to self-defence under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. No international norm, certainly not one to which we have not subscribed, can compromise or supersede our fundamental right to self-defence.

The difference between the Indian and Pakistani actions is crucial. India's tests were a provocation; Pakistan's tests were a reaction. India's tests destabilized the deterrence that had existed in South Asia for the last 20 years; Pakistan's tests restabilized the mutual deterrence.

We are grateful to China for recognizing the distinction between the Indian and Pakistani tests. We are grateful to many other friends for acknowledging this privately. It is therefore sad and regrettable that in their operational response to these tests, many of our friends have failed to make this distinction. The sanctions and other actions taken against Pakistan are unfair and unjust, especially since they have hurt Pakistan much more than they have India. We cannot but deplore this combination of coercion and inequity. It is counter-productive.

Even as we conducted our nuclear tests, we were conscious of the need to take measures to prevent a nuclear or conventional arms race in South Asia. We were conscious of the need to contain the proliferation impact of the South Asian developments. On 2 June 1998, a few days after our tests, Pakistan suggested at the Conference on Disarmament a comprehensive approach to build security and stability in South Asia by promoting measures to avoid war, mutual nuclear restraint, a balance in conventional forces and solutions to the underlying disputes, especially the issue of Kashmir.

The response of the international community in the P-5 communiqué and in Security Council resolution 1172 (1998) focused on the non-proliferation implications of the tests rather than on the security and arms escalation dangers in South Asia. While these decisions envisaged a comprehensive approach to security in the region and recognized the need to address the core dispute over Kashmir, they were not an acceptable basis for progress because they incorporated unrealistic objectives, exhibited double standards and failed to fully distinguish between India's provocation and Pakistan's reaction.

Notwithstanding this, we are convinced that there is no fundamental difference in the essential objectives espoused by the international community and by Pakistan. These are to lower tensions and avoid war, prevent nuclear escalation, promote conventional stability, seek solutions to Kashmir and other underlying issues and contain the threat of further nuclear proliferation. We have opened a serious dialogue with the United States on a realistic agenda that seeks to promote all these objectives. Also, we have resumed the Foreign Secretary-level talks with India. In Islamabad last week, our two countries addressed the priority issues of peace and security and Jammu and Kashmir.

Pakistan has been responsive to the concerns of the international community. Soon after our tests, we announced a unilateral moratorium on further testing. Earlier during this session of the General Assembly, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif reaffirmed Pakistan's support for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which we hope will come into force before next September. As the Prime Minister stated,

> "Pakistan's adherence to the Treaty will take place only in conditions free from coercion or pressure." *(A/53/PV.12, p. 13)*

The Prime Minister added in this regard that we expect that the arbitrary restrictions imposed on Pakistan by multilateral institutions will be speedily removed. We also expect that discriminatory sanctions against Pakistan will be

lifted, and we count on the full support of the world community for a just resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute.

It was in anticipation of a constructive and coercion-free environment, and notwithstanding our concerns regarding unequal stockpiles, that we agreed to the commencement of the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a non-discriminatory, universal and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. Pakistan has consistently believed that a ban on fissile materials production can be realized only through a universal and non-discriminatory treaty negotiated in the Conference on Disarmament. It cannot be achieved through unilateral or partial measures.

We believe that a wide disparity between the fissile material stockpiles of India and Pakistan could erode the stability of nuclear deterrence. The impact of such asymmetry could be further exacerbated once India acquires the S-300 anti-ballistic missile systems and additional anti-aircraft systems. Therefore, in the course of the negotiations in the ad hoc committee, Pakistan will — as envisaged in the Shannon Report — raise its concerns about and seek a solution to the problem of unequal stockpiles.

Pakistan continues to adhere to its policy of not exporting sensitive nuclear technology or equipment. We are prepared to discuss and improve our administrative and regulatory measures to implement this policy. This process should promote non-discrimination and reciprocal benefits. Pakistan cannot be simultaneously considered a partner in and a target of non-proliferation regimes.

Pakistan's priority is to construct a durable structure of peace and security in South Asia. This will involve nuclear and conventional arms restraint, as well as solutions to underlying issues. It will have to be based on the principles of equal security and equal treatment of Pakistan and India. Although India claims to have weaponized and even deployed its nuclear capability, Pakistan is prepared to explore the possibilities for mutual restraint in order to avoid a nuclear arms race and a hair-trigger security environment. But we cannot accept efforts to restrain capabilities at unequal levels. This could seriously jeopardize mutual deterrence.

The stability of mutual deterrence in South Asia may also be adversely affected by the asymmetry in conventional weapons capabilities between India and Pakistan. This asymmetry is growing steadily due to the embargoes still maintained against us by some major Powers and the massive arms acquisitions that India is making. We hope that concerted action will be adopted by the international community to redress this conventional inequality, which will inevitably intensify Pakistan's reliance on its nuclear capabilities.

The Secretary-General's annual report recognizes the Kashmir dispute as a possible nuclear flashpoint. Indeed, Kashmir is the key to resolving the security crisis in South Asia. We welcome the recognition by the P-5 and by the Security Council that Kashmir is a fundamental issue for South Asia and one with implications for international peace and security. But it will not be sufficient to lower tensions over Kashmir. This would have transient and perhaps illusory advantage. There must be genuine progress towards a just solution based on the freely expressed wishes of the Kashmiri people, as envisaged in the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Pakistan will make a sincere endeavour in the resumed bilateral dialogue with India to promote progress towards a final settlement of the Kashmir dispute. While addressing the political and legal aspects of the dispute, Pakistan has suggested implementation of a number of humanitarian and confidence-building measures, including the strengthening of the contingent of United Nations observers stationed in Jammu and Kashmir.

Even as the bilateral dialogue proceeds, the United Nations cannot divest itself of the responsibility to encourage and assist in promoting a solution to the Kashmir dispute. It involves, after all, the implementation of several Security Council resolutions. We were happy to receive the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Islamabad last June, although he was, regrettably, unable to visit India. We look forward to receiving the Secretary-General in the near future. We have expressed our readiness to accept his mediation and good offices to resolve the Kashmir dispute and other problems between Pakistan and India.

The call for nuclear restraint in South Asia is based on moral concern about the danger of the use of nuclear weapons. This danger does not arise only, or even primarily, from South Asia. Despite the end of the cold war, the danger of the deliberate or accidental use of nuclear weapons has not significantly diminished.

The following facts should cause grave concern. Since the indefinite extension of the NPT, some nuclear-weapon States have claimed the right to retain nuclear weapons

indefinitely. START II has not been ratified; START III is only a glimmer. Even if START II is fully implemented, 10,000 nuclear warheads will remain with the two major nuclear Powers. Under these circumstances, will all the other three nuclear Powers join in the nuclear-disarmament process? Some nuclear weapon States have adopted war-fighting doctrines which envisage the use of nuclear weapons. If conflicts and confrontation resume among the nuclear Powers, it may prove extremely difficult to maintain stable nuclear deterrence in a multipolar world. Nuclear deterrence among the nuclear Powers could also be destabilized if some of them go ahead with the deployment of theatre missile defence systems or anti-satellite systems. This may provoke a new nuclear and missile race and the militarization of outer space.

Under these circumstances, the refusal of some nuclear-weapon States to accept meaningful commitments to achieve nuclear disarmament is inexplicable and unacceptable. We cannot be satisfied by receiving periodic reports of glacial progress in the bilateral nuclear talks. A genuine process of nuclear disarmament pursued and negotiated in the single multilateral forum for disarmament, the Conference on Disarmament, is essential. The measures that the nuclear Powers could be asked to implement have been set out in a number of widely endorsed documents: the Canberra Commission report; the phased programme for nuclear disarmament proposed by a group of 26 countries, including Pakistan, in the Conference on Disarmament; and the proposals outlined in the Dublin declaration of the Group of Eight.

The propulsion of technology and political ambition threatens to militarize outer space. Nuclear weapons are prohibited from this environment; now we must prohibit all weapons and military activity from outer space. Pakistan will press for the creation of an ad hoc committee of the Conference on Disarmament next year to negotiate a legally binding instrument for the preservation of outer space for peaceful purposes.

Next year an ambitious work programme is envisaged in negotiating a protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention. We fully support the conclusion of the protocol before the next review conference of the Biological Weapons Convention. However, agreement is more likely to result from the demonstration of greater flexibility by certain major countries rather than merely from more negotiating time. The consensus must reflect genuine commitment to the technical cooperation and assistance envisaged under article X of the Biological Weapons Convention.

The entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention revealed the unpleasant reality of our neighbour's clandestine chemical weapons programme, despite the solemn Pakistan-India declaration of 1992 that neither possessed chemical weapons. We urge that a programme be worked out for the urgent destruction of India's chemical-weapon stocks under close international scrutiny. We also urge that the host of issues that remained outstanding in the Preparatory Commission should be resolved expeditiously by the Executive Council and the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention.

Pakistan agrees that it is essential to devote greater attention to restraining the build-up of conventional weapons, regionally and globally. But let us not merely disarm the unarmed. We must adopt a comprehensive approach with simultaneous efforts to address the three main aspects of the problems posed by conventional armaments.

First, we should evolve national and international measures to arrest the increasing lethality and sophistication of conventional weapons, which increase suffering and, equally important, intensify the concentration of destructive power in the hands of a few militarily and technologically advanced Powers.

Secondly, we should evolve agreements to prevent the creation of serious arms imbalances in the regions of tension and conflict. One step could be the adoption of a framework for conventional disarmament and arms control at the regional and subregional level. Such a framework could incorporate guidelines, *inter alia*, to prevent the possibility of a surprise military attack, promote equilibrium in defence capabilities between potential adversaries and so forth.

Thirdly, we should develop procedures for the regulation of the transfer of armaments, including small arms. Such transfers should be restrained where serious arms imbalances already exist, without prejudice to the legitimate right of States to self-defence and the right of peoples to self-determination.

Due to its need to deter and delay a conventional attack along its long and tense frontiers, Pakistan cannot now adhere to the Ottawa treaty. But we are in the process of ratifying Protocol II of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, which we believe will address most of the humanitarian problems relating to anti-personnel landmines. Pakistan has played an active role in demining operations, including in Kuwait, Cambodia, Bosnia and

Angola. We reiterate our call for a vigorous global demining programme, especially in war-ravaged countries such as Afghanistan.

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Final Document of the first specialsession devoted to disarmament. It remains the only comprehensive consensus document on disarmament negotiated and agreed by the entire United Nations membership. In the transformed circumstances of the post-cold-war period, it would be timely for this Assembly to convene another special session, at the end of 1999, to build a new disarmament consensus to coincide with the dawn of the new century and the new millennium.

Mr. Mahugu (Kenya): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and other members of the Bureau on your well-deserved election. I wish to assure you of my delegation's support in the work of this Committee.

There are many urgent issues relevant to the work of this Committee that need our attention, be they in the field of nuclear disarmament, conventional disarmament or disarmament and development. Progress has been made in many areas. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) recently received a new lease on life, while the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty already has 150 States signatories, including my own country. The Chemical Weapons Convention and the Convention on anti-personnel landmines, which recently received its fortieth ratification, are other cases in point.

However, in these and other areas, a lot more needs to be done. The illicit transfer of conventional arms continues unabated, and toxic and radioactive wastes continue to find their way to our shores, while the insecurity linked to poverty and underdevelopment continues to haunt us.

The last 12 months will be remembered for the progress made towards the prohibition of anti-personnel landmines, an issue of extreme importance which has been a source of anguish to the entire international community, and most particularly to Africa.

Kenya looks forward to the entry into force on 1 March 1999 of the landmines Convention and applauds the demonstration of international resolve to ban those indiscriminate weapons, as reflected by the speedy ratification of the Convention. In Africa, landmines have had a devastating effect, mutilating and killing civilians, especially innocent women and children, and rendering whole agricultural areas physically uninhabitable and economically unproductive. It is therefore appropriate that Mozambique, a country that has endured and continues to endure tremendous suffering from this scourge, should provide the venue for the first meeting of the States parties to the Convention in May 1999, and for that we are grateful to the Government of Mozambique. It is our fervent hope that countries such as Mozambique and Angola will become the first beneficiaries of the remarkable international effort that we anticipate being made to rid the world of anti-personnel landmines and make their victims productive members of their communities. Like many in Africa, Kenya looks forward to a time when the production, use, stockpiling and transfer of all kinds of landmines will be a thing of the past.

Similarly, we are concerned about the continuing illicit transfer and use of conventional arms, which constitute a major cause of insecurity in many regions of the world, particularly in developing countries. In this regard, the Secretary-General, in his report to the Security Council of 13 April this year on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (S/1998/318), clearly identified the proliferation of conventional arms as an issue that needed to be addressed as a matter of urgency by the international community. In paragraph 28 of the report, the Secretary-General stated,

> "The goal of public identification of international arms merchants and their activities has proved elusive, but perhaps no other single initiative would do more to help combat the flow of illicit arms to Africa — a trade that is made possible largely by the secrecy that surrounds it."

The critical role and responsibility of countries manufacturing and exporting these weapons cannot be overemphasized. We support the Secretary-General's call, also in paragraph 28 of the report, for restraint "in supplying weapons especially to areas of actual or potential conflict". In that connection, we note the work currently under way in the Council in support of the Secretary-General's call and hope that the call will be heeded.

The dumping of radioactive and toxic wastes on the shores and in the waters of some developing countries remains a cause of concern to all of us. The tragedy therein is twofold. One aspect is that a section of our global village produces more waste than it can treat, and chooses insensitively to dump it elsewhere. The second is that the dumping ground is totally unprepared to handle such wastes in terms both of technological know-how, which it

desperately lacks, and of resources, which it does not have. In addition, the indiscriminate nature of the dumping of hazardous wastes causes untold harm to the environment, livelihoods and health of the people. There is clearly a need to address this issue urgently and comprehensively. In 1996, Kenya welcomed as a step in the right direction the amendment to the Basel Convention, adopted in Geneva, that prohibits the export of such wastes from countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to non-OECD countries, and stressed that more needed to be done. That continues to be our position today.

The nuclear tests carried out by India and Pakistan will no doubt be remembered as having dealt a serious blow to our aspirations for a world free of nuclear weapons. It is indeed regrettable that the insecurity created as a result of the lack of serious commitment by the nuclear-weapon States to move towards disarmament has provided an excuse for others, who may have felt the need to ensure their own security, to test. Unfortunate though their actions may be, a wake-up call has most definitely been sounded.

To this end, the need for security assurances for the non-nuclear-weapon States and an even more urgent need for renewed efforts to rid the world of nuclear weapons must be stressed. We look to the nuclear-weapon States to start the ball rolling. The rest of us expect them to seriously take on their responsibilities of finally removing the threat of nuclear weapons, which, even with the end of the cold war, continues to hang over our heads.

It is Kenya's conviction that no testing of any kind should be carried out and that all tests pose a threat to all of us by increasing the chances of proliferation and, indeed, of an arms race. In this regard, we welcome the renewed commitment contained in the Geneva Communiqué of the five declared nuclear-weapon States, which, *inter alia*, expressed their determination to fulfil their commitments relating to nuclear disarmament under article VI of the NPT.

We attach great importance to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as an exceptionally important global mechanism for addressing nuclear non-proliferation issues. The NPT, together with regional measures, such as the Treaties of Pelindaba, Rarotonga, Tlatelolco and Bangkok, fortify the commitment of the international community to nuclear disarmament. For our part, we would like to reaffirm our belief in regional arrangements as a useful means of reducing tension, encouraging sustainable socio-economic development, promoting confidence and enhancing regional stability and security. Such agreements encourage peaceful uses of nuclear technology and should, to that extent, become vehicles for the transfer of technology. We express the conviction that nuclear technology will play an instrumental role in the socio-economic sphere and in this regard look forward to the Sixth NPT Review Conference with anticipation and, indeed, hope.

In the same vein, Kenya welcomes the efforts under way towards negotiating an international instrument on fissile material cut-off. We welcome the establishment of an ad hoc committee to work towards negotiations on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and effectively verifiable instrument. Such an instrument would have to be truly comprehensive and address the concerns of those of us who believe that our common security lies in, among other factors, a nuclear-free world. For that and other reasons, Kenya strongly supports the convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

In conclusion, it is clear that any achievements in the field of disarmament, both nuclear and conventional, will allow us to focus on more crucial matters pertaining to our socio-economic development. We must all make concerted efforts to break the cycle of poverty and tackle the debt burden that engulfs us and greatly compounds the breakdown of law and order, promotes ethnic strife and causes conflicts in many parts of the world.

We should not allow massive resources to continue to be diverted to armaments. Disarmament should free resources for development purposes, as was intended. Let us all strive towards that end as we approach the next millennium.

Mr. Ka (Senegal) (*interpretation from French*): For half a century the United Nations has been travelling the path of progressively establishing the bases of an international system that should be able to ensure the collective security of all of our States. The efforts made for general, complete and verified disarmament represent an important achievement of this common will to strengthen international security.

Although significant progress has been achieved in this area over the past decade, particularly with regard to the reduction and elimination of weapons of mass destruction, we are nevertheless obliged to note that global disarmament remains a long-term objective.

My country considers that, in addition to the potential for destruction represented by nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, serious problems of security are also associated with conventional weapons in many conflicts and tensions raging in the world, particularly in Africa.

In this respect, my delegation feels that it is the duty of the international community to devote particular attention to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, whose circulation in Africa has become a real scourge. These weapons not only threaten the security and stability of African States but also represent a major obstacle to the building and consolidation of social peace and of the democratic process, without which no economic and social development policy on the African continent is conceivable.

That is why my country, along with many African countries, is of the view that absolute priority should be given to the strategies and initiatives aimed at combating the proliferation of these small arms and to eliminate their sale and traffic, particularly in conflict areas.

In this context, my delegation welcomes in particular the proposals contained in the report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms, which suggests to the international community a certain number of paths that are likely to lead to a reduction in the uncontrolled spread of these weapons.

Along these same lines, my delegation would like to note the efforts being made by the member States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to achieve a regional moratorium on the import, export and manufacture of light weapons. In this respect, substantial progress was made at the joint meeting at Banjul in July last of the ministers of defence, ministers of the interior and ministers of security. That meeting considered a draft mechanism for ECOWAS for the prevention, management and settlement of conflicts and for peacekeeping and security. The ministers unanimously adopted at the end of the meeting a declaration on the moratorium whose modalities for implementation will be adopted at the next ECOWAS Summit, planned for Abuja at the end of the month.

Clearly this moratorium, whose duration has not yet been determined, is but one step towards the goal of a reduction in the traffic in these small arms, pending a substantial and harmonized response from the international community with a view to establishing an effective mechanism to combat illicit traffic and effectively to control the movement of these weapons.

Despite the considerable mobilization today in Africa to combat the danger posed by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, it remains clear that Africa alone cannot deal with it. Hence the particular interest that my country attaches to the various initiatives being taken at the international level to control the excessive buildup and uncontrolled use of these weapons. In this context, my delegation is pleased to stress the efforts being made jointly by Norway and Canada to intensify and harmonize actions in a consistent and effective way. My country also supports the proposal of the Swiss Government to host a conference under the auspices of the United Nations on the illicit traffic of weapons.

A few weeks ago the international community welcomed the deposit of the fortieth instrument of ratification on the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. My country, which deposited its instruments of ratification a few days later, is pleased with this event, which represents a significant milestone towards a world free of anti-personnel landmines.

The entry into force of this Convention illustrates the firm resolve of the community of nations to resolve the humanitarian issues raised by these cowardly weapons. My country pays tribute to the Government of the fraternal country of Mozambique for its proposal to host the first meeting of States parties in May 1999 at Maputo. No other continent has experienced the devastating and painful effects of these indiscriminate weapons to the same extent as Africa.

Nuclear disarmament, as well as questions linked to non-proliferation, continue to be a source of major concern for the entire international community. Even so, it is clear that in this respect we have taken important steps — indeed, seen significant breakthroughs — on the path towards the effective elimination of these weapons of mass destruction. These successes can be attributed to the commitment and sustained political will of the great majority of the States Members of our Organization. Thanks to this new universal awareness, many agreements and conventions on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation have been concluded, thus opening up the encouraging prospect of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Along these lines, the Conference on Disarmament, of which my country is a member, which has long been bogged down in fruitless considerations, finally agreed this year to begin to negotiate the outlines of a treaty

prohibiting the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices.

My delegation strongly hopes that these negotiations will lead to a rapid conclusion of the treaty, thus making it possible to achieve the goals of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. It is also in this spirit that my country is pleased with the commitments made by the Governments of India and Pakistan to accede to the nuclear disarmament regime. We also welcome Brazil's decision to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Senegal has always given utmost priority to our common objective of the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, because it has always been and remains an active supporter of the transfer of the vast wealth swallowed up by the arms race to sustainable development activities. Promoting the development of poor nations thanks to the disarmament dividend should be our aspiration and should motivate us further in our collective undertaking to build a world of peace and progress.

My country remains convinced that with our determination and our joint efforts, we will be able to make this qualitative leap for the security of humankind on the eve of the third millennium.

The Chairman: I should like to raise two points in the interest of the smooth operation of the Committee's work.

First, to date the Secretariat has received only three draft resolutions. I should like to appeal to delegations to submit draft resolutions to the Secretariat as soon as possible before the deadline set for submission — Friday, 23 October.

I am appealing particularly to those delegations introducing draft resolutions under traditional agenda items and those that may entail financial implications. The sooner the Secretariat receives draft resolutions, the quicker they can be processed and the requisite financial implications researched and reproduced. In that way we will be able to avoid a logjam at the end of this week.

Secondly, I should like to remind delegations of the deadlines for the submission of draft resolutions. As members know, draft resolutions under all disarmament and international security items — that is, 63-79 — are due by 1 p.m. this coming Friday, 23 October.

Draft resolutions under agenda item 80, dealing with the rationalization of the work and reform of the agenda of the First Committee, are due by 6 p.m. this Friday.

In this connection, I should like to underline that the agreed deadlines for submission of draft resolutions will be strictly observed. I have requested the Secretariat to enforce them strictly.

Moreover, as members will recall, our programme of work calls for thematic discussion on all items and the introduction of draft resolutions to begin on Friday, 23 October, at the scheduled 3 p.m. meeting. During the second phase of our work, I would strongly encourage delegations to avoid making new general statements. The meaning of last year's reform is precisely that. During that phase, the discussion should follow the existing repartition in clusters.

In that connection also, allow me to appeal to delegations to take advantage of that meeting to introduce draft resolutions, especially traditional ones, so that we can make optimum use of the time available to us.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.